

## **Chapter 3**

# **SURVIVAL**

*“My nightmare was that our units would reach the barriers in the very first hours of the attack, be unable to get through, and then be hit with a chemical barrage. We'd equipped our troops with protective gear and trained them to fight through a chemical attack, but there was always the danger that they'd end up milling around in confusion - or worse, that they'd panic. The United States had not fought in a gas attack since World War I. The possibility of mass casualties from chemical weapons was the main reason we had sixty-three hospitals, two hospital ships, and eighteen thousand beds ready in the war zone.”*

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, 1991

### **CONCEPT**

The actions of your unit when it encounters its first NBC attack are major factors in determining success. If not properly prepared, the psychological impact of NBC can be devastating to your unit's combat effectiveness. Your unit, if trained and confident, can survive an NBC attack and minimize casualties.

### **Chemical and Biological**

Two basic actions are required for your unit to survive a CB attack. The first action is to mask quickly and properly, and the second is to warn or alert all personnel of the attack. There are three ways your unit may be warned or alerted to mask.

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- Your unit may be notified through command or NBC channels that it is in a downwind hazard zone. This method provides adequate time for all individuals to mask or obtain overhead cover or collective protection. Your major concern is an effective notification system

- The attacks may activate unit NBC alarms. You do not have as much time as above, but there should be sufficient time to warn all personnel

- Your unit may encounter a direct attack, which triggers your automatic masking criteria. This is the most dangerous situation, but a well trained unit can survive and minimize casualties

The mask is the most critical item of protective equipment. **Over 90% of chemical and biological warfare casualties are caused by agent entering through the respiratory system or eyes; therefore, a serviceable, properly fitted mask protects you against this threat.** However, many soldiers do not believe their NBC protective equipment provides adequate protection and do not use proper procedures to mask and unmask. This equipment is excellent, and the individual soldier must be made aware of its protective capability. Use your chemical battle staff to instill soldier confidence in their NBC equipment.

## Nuclear

The three basic actions for nuclear survival are:

- Use the best cover and concealment (e.g., fighting positions, covered/concealed movement, and shelters)
- Disperse materiel and soldiers as much as the situation allows
- Keep exposed skin covered

These are critical survival actions in the face of **any** threat, not just nuclear capable opposition. Maintaining good operations security/communications security (OPSEC/COMSEC) are supplemental activities that further reduce vulnerability.

## What Are Your Major Survival Concerns?

### How Do you Address These Concerns?

#### Soldier's Masks are Serviceable and Properly Fitted

*The mask is the most important item of protective equipment. Most chemical/biological casualties are caused by agents entering the body through the eyes or the respiratory system.*

**Ensure all individual protective equipment is available, serviceable, and with soldiers. Test fit of all masks using the M41 protective mask fit validation system (PMFVS).**

#### Panic

*This may be your biggest problem. WWI troops broke ranks, removed masks, and reported to medical channels even when not gassed.*

**Panic can only be avoided by soldiers having confidence in their equipment and state of NBC training. Leaders must discuss what to expect from an NBC attack and instill confidence in their NBC system including their equipment. Leaders must become the principal NBC trainers to have an effective program.**

#### All Individuals (To Include Senior Leaders) are Proficient in Common NBC Tasks

*These tasks are found in the Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks - Skill Level 1.*

**These common tasks must be rehearsed and evaluated during the Skill Development Test. To survive an NBC attack, soldiers must be proficient in masking and then first aid, buddy-aid, and individual decon.**

**Unit Has an Effective NBC Warning and Reporting System**

*This system is used to rapidly report an NBC attack in order for troops to take protection, and to report attacks to higher, subordinate, and adjacent headquarters*

**Rehearse warning and reporting system including the employment of NBC detectors and alarms. Use all these methods to determine an attack has occurred, (i.e., through command channels, unit NBC detectors, and direct attack on your unit).**

**What Are Your Required Actions?**

- **Obtain information on attack**
- **Make MOPP decisions**
- **Make movement decisions**
- **Make decontamination decisions**

**Obtain Information on Attack**

Obtain and report number of casualties and contamination status (personnel, equipment, and terrain).

**Make MOPP Decisions**

Units will automatically increase their MOPP posture after being attacked. Units not in the immediate attack area, but in the downwind hazard area may need to increase their MOPP level. The goal is to remain in the minimum MOPP level as possible and reduce MOPP as quickly as possible. If the attack was not directly on your unit,

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you may be able to reduce MOPP to just the mask. A mask only posture can be assumed only if there is no liquid agent present and the agent is not blister. Use your chemical battle staff and Table 3-1 below for recommendations.

Table 3-1. Standardized MOPP levels

MOPP Level	Over Garment	Overboots	Mask/Hood	Gloves
0	Readily Available	Readily Available	Carried	Readily Available
1	Worn <sup>A</sup>	Carried	Carried	Carried
2	Worn <sup>A</sup>	Worn	Carried	Carried
3	Worn <sup>A</sup>	Worn	Worn <sup>B</sup>	Carried
4	Worn	Worn	Worn	Worn
Mask Only	Readily Available	Readily Available	Worn	Readily Available
<sup>A</sup> Jacket worn open or closed based on temperature				
<sup>B</sup> Hood worn open or closed based on temperature				

### Make Movement Decisions

Don't move from a contaminated area unless it is tactically sound. However, plan to move as soon as possible to reduce risk of casualties from contamination or heat stress

### Make Decontamination Decisions

- Individuals automatically decontaminate themselves and their equipment, if required
- You must decide when and if there is a need for further decontamination (i.e., get recommendations from your chemical battle staff)

**What Actions Are Required from Your Unit ?**

- **If warning is received, prepare for attack**
- **If warning is not received, react to attack**
- **Perform decontamination**
- **Reduce MOPP**
- **Continue mission**

**If Warning Is Received, Prepare for Attack**

- Notify all personnel through warning and reporting system
- All personnel go into MOPP3 or 4
- Notify higher, adjacent, and lower headquarters when hazard arrives
- Leaders should be visible to reduce fear
- Cover equipment, if mission permits, to minimize contamination

**If Warning Is *Not* Received, React to Attack**

- Personnel mask automatically -- masking guidance should be established based on threat and vulnerability analyses (have chemical battle staff prepare a recommendation)
- Notify higher, adjacent, and lower headquarters immediately
- Conduct first aid and personnel decontamination if required
- Leaders should be visible to reduce fear

## Perform Decontamination

In addition to personnel decontamination, perform decontamination on unit equipment, if time is available and if necessary to restore combat power.

## Reduce MOPP

Reduce MOPP levels based on chemical staff recommendations and when detection efforts indicate higher MOPP is no longer required.

## Continue Mission

One of the most important actions under NBC conditions is to continue to focus on your mission. Do not over emphasize or concentrate on the NBC attack at the expense of your primary mission.

### What Actions Are Required from Your Chemical Battle Staff?

- **Perform threat and vulnerability analysis**
- **Check status on all NBC actions**
- **Send, receive, and analyze NBC reports**
- **Perform MOPP analysis**
- **Perform contamination analysis**

## Perform Threat and Vulnerability Analysis

Determine type of agent and delivery systems, vulnerability of units, and automatic masking procedures.

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### **Check Status on All NBC Actions**

Obtain status of casualties, contamination, and decontamination operations.

### **Send, Receive, and Analyze NBC Reports**

Ensure all reports are submitted accurately and expeditiously.

### **Perform MOPP Analysis**

Perform MOPP analysis and provide MOPP level recommendations based on METT-T.

### **Perform Contamination Analysis**

Recommend decontamination actions and whether/when unit should move based on a contamination analysis.

**NOTES:**